

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 IO-13 EUR-12 HA-05 ISO-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /104 W
-----067957 290639Z/10

R 281305Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1256
INFO USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

S E C R E T LIBREVILLE 1764

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MMOL, AO PU PO
SUBJ: CUBANS IN SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

REF: LIBREVILLE 1291

1. WE CONTINUE RECEIVE CONFLICTING REPORTS FROM DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES RE PRESENCE OF CUBAN TROOPS IN SAO TOME. SOURCES ARE INVARIABLY UNIDENTIFIED. HOWEVER, FOR WHAT IT WORTH, BELGIAN AMBASSADOR NOW BELIEVES THAT THERE ARE APPROX 200 CUBAN SOLDIERS ON SAO TOME AUGMENTED BY PERHAPS AS MANY AS 600 ANGOLANS. HE QUOTES FRENCH AMBASSADOR AS BELIEVING THERE MAY BE 700 CUBANS WHICH APPROX SAME FIGURE GIVEN TO US BY FRENCH CULTURAL ATTACHE RESIDENT THERE (REFTEL LIBREVILLE 1291). UNDP RESREP CITED FIGURE OF 1000, BUT SAID HE BELIEVES 300 IS MUCH CLOSER TO TRUTH. HE TOO, THOUGH THERE WERE ALSO ANGOLANS.

2. NONE OF DIPS HAVE ANY CLEAR IDEA WHAT CUBANS A/O ANGOLANS MAY BE DOING THERE. COUNTRY IS SO SMALL THAT ANY EXTENSIVE TRAINING WOULD BE NOTICED BY SOMEONE AS WOULD PRESENCE OF CUBANS IN SAO TOME OR SMALL TOWNS. (APPRARENTLY THIS DID OCCUR ONCE SOME MONTHS AGO ACCORDING BELGIAN).

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PRINCIPE IS VERY ISOLATED, BUT SAO TOMEANS WOULD HAVE TO FIND SOME WAY TO GET THEM THERE AND PROBABLY SUPPORT THEM. LACKING ANY INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION AND FEARING THAT SOURCE OF ALL THESE REPORTS MAY BE SAME MAN, WE STILL TEND BE SKEPTICAL. IT CONCEIVABLE, OF COURSE, THAT CUBANS AND ANGOLANS MAY BE USING SAO TOME AS REST AREA, OR THAT CUBANS MAY BE USING THE COUNTRY AS A SMALL STAGING AREA

FOR ANGOLA, AND THAT SOLDIERS MAY SIMPLY BE CONFIEND TO
BARRACKS.

3. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY OTHER INFO DEPT MAY HAVE,
AND WOULD BE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED TO KNOW WHAT PORTUGUESE
THINK SINCE THERE NO PORTUGUESE MISSION IN LIBREVILLE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SPHERE OF INFLUENCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LIBREV01764
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780268-0849
Format: TEL
From: LIBREVILLE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780612/aaaaakjm.tel
Line Count: 71
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5b404f7e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LIBREVILLE 1291
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2181617
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CUBANS IN SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE
TAGS: MMOL, AO, PU, PO, CU, TP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5b404f7e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014